

**LODI CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL "TOWN HALL" CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2001**

A. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Special "Town Hall" City Council meeting of October 25, 2001 was called to order by Mayor Nakanishi at 7:03 p.m.

Present: Council Members – Hitchcock, Howard, Land, and Mayor Nakanishi

Absent: Council Members – Pennino

Also Present: City Manager Flynn, Deputy City Attorney Schwabauer, and City Clerk Blackston

B. TOPIC

B-1 "Discussion regarding water issues"

Mayor Nakanishi stated that water is one of the most important issues facing Lodi and San Joaquin County. He read the following statement, "Water, it has been called the next crisis after energy by some pundits, but that is a misnomer. Water is a crisis that has been there all along and San Joaquin County's lack of a comprehensive, thoughtful water plan does not bode well if 325,000 more people are going to be turning on the tap. Predictions do not always come true, but it would be foolhardy to not heed the Council of Governments findings. The time to prepare the County for its next generation of residents is now."

Public Works Director Prima introduced each of the speakers. He reported that 10% of the rainfall in southern California runs off, whereas nearly 50% does in the northern part of the state. The state and federal government have developed a complex system of canals and reservoirs that move water throughout the state. The Los Angeles area was recently cut back on the amount of water it receives from the Colorado River. It is estimated that two-thirds of California's drinking water come through or via the Delta. The San Joaquin River has a major problem with dissolved oxygen and other constituents extending from Stockton up to Disappointment Slough. Issues in the east part of the county include water quality and basin overdraft. Central Delta areas of concern involve water levels and issues with the cross Delta channel. The South Delta contends with problems involving water quality and water levels. There are supply issues in the southwest area due to growth. The eastern San Joaquin County basin has lost nearly 2.5 million-acre feet of storage. By 2030 it is estimated that the groundwater table in the area east of Stockton will be down to 90 feet.

In reply to Council Member Land, Mr. Prima reported that saline has been detected at White Slough.

Dante Nomellini, Manager and Co-Counsel for the Central Delta Water Agency, stated that the Central Delta is comprised of 120,000 acres of primarily agricultural land west of Interstate 5. Its mission is to protect the water quality and quantity in the Delta channels so that the islands in the Delta can continue agricultural use. Two water projects were authorized and constructed that move water from north to south on the premise that only surplus water would be taken. CALFED documents have established a priority for a 15% increase in delivery to the west side of the San Joaquin valley. Mr. Nomellini stated that it has immunized the two water projects from further reductions due to endangered species, which will result in water coming from northern California so that the exporters do not lose any water. Fundamental in the Delta Protection Act is the maintenance of a common pool of water in the Delta from which local users and exporters will take water. There has been a strong effort on the part of the water exporters to get a connection to the Sacramento River. CALFED has purportedly embarked on a program whereby the preferred alternative that it will pursue for a seven-year period, is not to have an isolated canal. Mr. Nomellini stated that this is a serious threat to the Delta. He described a proposal for a "chain of lakes" that would divert water from the Sacramento River, pipe it under the channel, and flood islands. CALFED has been acquiring vast amounts of land in the Delta, which it purports is for environmental restoration. He stated that the Delta wetlands proposal is a private company attempting to develop a reservoir project in the

Delta. CALFED is now completing a study of the feasibility of the acquisition of the Delta wetlands project. Mr. Nomellini stated that there is a strong momentum that would isolate the water supply from the Delta, which would eventually lead to its destruction. There are problems associated with reservoirs in the Delta related to seepage. The Central Delta Water Agency strives to secure the priority for northern California and protect the water quality and quantity and the promise that the Delta be maintained as a common pool. Fresh water flow into the Delta is reduced by upstream diversion, which pipes water to the east Bay Area.

Jack Sieglock, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Member, reported that for over a year the county has been working on a water management plan to prioritize all of the projects which can bring water to San Joaquin County. When completed, all cities and water districts in the county will be asked to adopt the plan. The county is also working on the Freeport diversion project, and is looking for perspective partners for groundwater banking projects. He commented that South San Joaquin Irrigation District has a project to bring water off the Stanislaus River, which will benefit a number of cities.

Alex Hildebrand of the South Delta Water Agency warned that the county's water supply is in more trouble than most people realize because it has been masked by recent wet years. Water from the Mokelumne, Calaveras, Stanislaus, and a share of the San Joaquin rivers have been taken from this area for export, fish flows, or to mitigate the impacts of the Central Valley Project (CVP). Most of the Mokelumne and Calaveras River water goes to the Bay Area and leaves San Joaquin County dependent on an unsustainable groundwater overdraft. Water from the upper San Joaquin basin and the Merced and Tuolumne Rivers has also been reduced. Inflows to the Delta have been reduced by 500,000-acre feet of water in an average year. The export to the Bay Area from the Tuolumne River also reduces inflow to Delta by approximately 300,000-acre feet a year. The inflow of the San Joaquin River to the Delta is now often less than the diversion requirements within the South Delta. The CVP imports up to a million tons of salt each year into its service area within the San Joaquin watershed. Part of this salt is salinizing the soils and groundwater of that service area and will gradually put those lands out of production. When the New Melones Dam was built, the State Water Resource Control Board mandated that it must release enough good water out of New Melones to dilute the salt to a maximum of 500 parts per million when it arrives in Vernalles which takes a substantial amount of water. Mr. Hildebrand believed that the water shortage could be relieved by capturing and storing water that is lost for flood control and fish flows. Other problems in the south Delta include water quality and loss of adequate water depth for diversions. This is caused by the draw down of the export pumps and the 25,000 tons of sediment that is brought into the tidal zone in the south Delta by the San Joaquin River. Mr. Hildebrand suggested that the sediment could be removed and sold to the market for fill.

Anthony Barkett, Stockton East Water District (SEWD), reported that SEWD was formed in 1948. It encompasses a portion of eastern San Joaquin County and serves the City of Stockton with its water supply. Excessive pumping of groundwater on the eastern part of the county has resulted in a critical overdraft. Groundwater levels under the City of Stockton have risen since 1978 when a surface water treatment plant began operation. Water levels have not risen under the cone of depression (further out in the eastern part of the county), which is causing the saline intrusion. Sixty five million dollars was paid to build a delivery system from New Melones to SEWD and Central San Joaquin. In 1993 the Central Valley Project Improvement Act was passed, which took a lot of water for purposes such as fish flows and water quality in the Delta. Approximately one year ago a feasibility study was completed, which led to a series of projects to test the idea of storing water in the ground through recharge. SEWD was awarded \$1.4 million to do a test at the site of the treatment plant. There are 2.5 million-acre feet of space in an underground reservoir, which could be filled with water. The San Joaquin Groundwater Banking Authority is working on this project and is comprised of SEWD, Lodi, Woodbridge, North San Joaquin, and Central San Joaquin. Mr. Barkett encouraged the Council to approve the Central Delta and South Delta's request to join San Joaquin Groundwater Banking Authority.

Fred Weybret, North San Joaquin Water Conservation District, reported that it was formed in 1948 and applied for water rights on the Mokelumne River. East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) filed a claim for the same water. The State Engineer (precursor to the State Water Resources Control Board) ruled in favor of EBMUD and told North San Joaquin that its water could come from the proposed Folsom south canal. North San Joaquin received a right for 500 cubic feet a second of surplus water to be delivered during December and June. It has a contract with EBMUD to store up to 20,000-acre feet a year in wet years of the December to June allotment for delivery later. Delivery of water to the agricultural community of the eastern San Joaquin area is subject to the ramifications of the weather. Farmers have found that groundwater is more suitable for drip irrigation than water delivered through an open irrigation ditch. Consequently, the use of North San Joaquin Water Conservation District has been gradually declining. North San Joaquin is trying to develop environmentally and economically sound ways to flood irrigate when there is a surplus of water, for the purpose of recharging the underground basin. North San Joaquin has filed numerous applications with the State Water Resources Control Board to get a firm water right. Mr. Weybret stated that Ed Steffani has assisted North San Joaquin to attempt to get legislation for a tax override for a small tax increment to create an incentive for the farmers to use the water instead of relying on their wells.

Ed Steffani, North San Joaquin Water Conservation District, reported that the groundwater level has not changed significantly between Davis and Lower Sacramento Road; however, it has gone down dramatically from Highway 99 to Highway 88, as well as Kettleman Lane at Davis Road to Highway 88. Between Kettleman Lane and Eight Mile Road, water levels have fallen 20 to 25 feet in the past 22 years. Groundwater levels in Lodi are falling at approximately a foot per year on average. In an effort to correct this problem, North San Joaquin is attempting to obtain legislation that would allow it to impose an acreage charge. It also applied for a \$500,000 grant to do a test in the Lockeford, Victor area to determine how fast water can be put into the ground. It recently applied for a \$25,000 grant to conduct a test on Kettleman Lane near Alpine Road to determine what would happen if vineyards are irrigated during the winter when vines are dormant.

In response to Council Member Howard regarding the possibility of fungus or mold growing on vines irrigated during the winter, Mr. Steffani stated that it is a concern; however, a University of California Extension vineyard expert had informed him that it would not be a problem.

Anthony Saracino, groundwater hydrologist, reported that an estimated 130,000 to 165,000 acre-feet of water is being taken out of the ground more than is naturally being replenished each year. Almost 3 million acre feet (the equivalent of three Folsom dams) has been mined since 1970 and projections show that an additional 2 million acre feet will be mined between now and 2030. Negative impacts from overdraft include subsidence, movement of saline waterfronts, additional cost to pump water from a deeper depth, and impact on water quality. He explained that groundwater banking is storing surface water in a groundwater basin during wet years for use during dry years. Storage can be accomplished by putting water into spreading basins, the use of injection wells, or in-lieu recharge where a user is provided surface water to stop pumping groundwater. Mr. Saracino believed that the county does not have enough access to water supplies, either groundwater sustainable or surface water, to meet its demand. He stated that there has been a number of successful groundwater banking projects in the state. In the early 1990s negotiations took place with EBMUD to develop a groundwater-banking project under local control. It was a \$24 million project that would have been funded entirely by EBMUD and have recharged up to 14,000-acre feet through injection wells and in-lieu recharge that would have resulted in 7,000-acre feet of annual average recharge. EBMUD would have stored water from its Mokelumne system off the Mokelumne River aqueduct in the groundwater basin. For every 1,000-acre feet of water it puts in, it would have taken 500 back in one and four years. This would have amounted to a 3,500-acre feet benefit at no cost to San Joaquin County interests. In order to design the project it

was necessary to test the ability of the groundwater basin to accept water via injection, as well as the political will of the community to engage in a project that involves import into the basin and export of a certain amount of water. In an effort to do this, the East San Joaquin Parties (now the Groundwater Banking Authority) developed the Beckman test project. Injection began in 1998 at 500 gallons per minute and it increased successfully, with over 300-acre feet being injected into the groundwater basin. Subsequently it was discovered that the county has an ordinance prohibiting extraction of groundwater without a permit. An application for the permit was denied because there were questions about the project and what impact it might have. As a result, the project is at a standstill.

In reply to Council Member Howard, Mr. Sieglock explained that the county's Surface Water/Groundwater Management Plan identifies and prioritizes a number of projects including the Groundwater Banking Authority's. Once the plan is adopted, it proceeds to the feasibility phase, and then to implementation.

Mr. Prima commented that he received a copy of the Surface Water/Groundwater Management Plan today and will forward copies to the Council.

In reference to Council Member Hitchcock's inquiries regarding water conservation and desalinization, Mr. Hildebrand explained that a reverse osmosis system creates brine, which must be disposed of. In coastal areas it is disposed of in the ocean; however, in the valley there is no place to put the salt. The process also takes a significant amount of energy. He encouraged the use of desalinization for drainage water that is only 1,000 to 3,000 parts per million, as it is quite feasible, and suggested that agencies who take water to the Bay Area should do so. Regarding water conservation, Mr. Hildebrand stated that in the Central Valley if more water is applied than a plant needs for irrigation, the excess water almost all ends up either back in the river system, or groundwater, for reuse. In the Bay Area, however, conservation methods such as low-flow toilets save water because the water would otherwise end up in the ocean. In Lodi the same method would only save distribution and water treatment costs, because water that is not consumed returns to the system and gets reused.

Council Member Land asked that the issue of including the South and Central Water Agencies in the Groundwater Banking Authority be brought back to Council for consideration. He also suggested that a review of Lodi's water rights be placed on a future Council agenda.

Mayor Nakanishi replied that he had a document outlining Lodi's water rights to the Mokelumne River and would share it with Council.

M. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

Susan J. Blackston
City Clerk